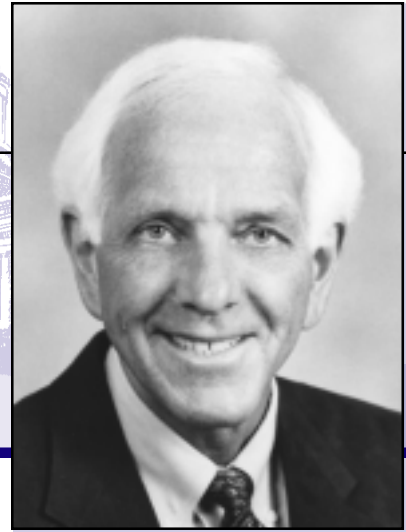


Representative Dave Quall

Session Report to the 40th Legislative District



August 1999

Dear neighbor:

The Legislature had a productive session in 1999, and a worthwhile 3-day special session in May. As the co-chair of the House Education Committee, my primary focus this year has been the schools of our area and across our state. This summary of action from the 1999 legislative sessions, as a result, emphasizes key education issues. As always, your thoughts and concerns are welcome and appreciated. I encourage you to call, write or e-mail my office in Mount Vernon with questions, concerns or suggestions.

School Accountability

This year the Legislature embarked upon the third and final major phase of education reform. House Bill 1462, which I introduced, and the comparable Senate bill, were the subject of long and intensive discussions and negotiations. Working closely with our Republican colleagues in the House we put together a strong bill, most of which was eventually approved by the Senate and signed by the Governor.

The new accountability law:

- Sets improvement goals for math at the 4th and 7th grades;
- Outlines assistance available to help schools enhance curriculum and teaching methods to bring more students up to state standards (and the budget includes funding for the assistance); and
- Creates a new independent commission of business leaders, parents and educators to oversee the accountability system. This independent panel will have the authority to decide what the “passing” score is that students must reach to meet the standard on state tests. They will have the power to set and adjust improvement goals in the future for reading, writing, math and science. And they will ultimately decide which schools require state intervention.

Handling disruptive students

Any teacher will tell you, and most parents know it too, that one disruptive student can single-handedly destroy the learning environment for an entire class. A persistently disruptive student can ruin a whole school year. Most teachers want the disruptive student removed so they don't have to focus on classroom management and direct all their energies toward one student. But most schools do not have a learning environment apart from the regular classroom where the disruptive student can be assigned for short or long periods of time.

Restoring discipline and order to the classroom so it's an environment conducive to learning was a key focus for me this session. I introduced HB 2085, which passed the legislature and was signed into law by Governor Locke. This measure provides training for teachers and principals in the best methods for handling disruptive students.

Quall appointed to national post

Dave Quall has been selected to serve on the Education Committee for the National Conference of State Legislatures' Assembly on State Issues. The appointment to a two-year term gives Quall the opportunity to share innovative ideas with other states and to hear from other top education leaders from around the country. The selection puts Quall in an ideal position to develop solutions for Washington schools based on the most promising policy options being tried in local communities in all 50 states.

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Session Report to the 40th Legislative District

Other school safety improvements

Following the regular session, I convened a group of principals and other educators from schools in Skagit County and elsewhere to find out what the most pressing school safety needs are at the school building level. They told me that alternative programs for disruptive and at-risk students was the most urgent priority. Second, principals felt school security guards were very important. So during the special session I introduced, and the Legislature approved House Bill 2304, providing \$7 million to improve the safety of our schools. Of these funds, \$4 million is available for alternative programs or prevention and intervention efforts. And \$3 million will fund security guards in schools.

Extra time for learning

The assumption behind education reform is that all students can achieve at much higher levels if we raise our expectations, clarify what specific knowledge and skills must be learned, and provide solid instruction. We also know, however, that different children learn at different rates. Some students will need more time to reach the higher standards. The traditional 180-day school year, with class for about 5 to 6 hours per day, just doesn't provide enough learning time with their teachers for a number of students. In order for education reform to succeed in raising all students to high levels of achievement, we must provide extra time for learning. I believe an additional 20 days of summer school would be the most beneficial way of helping struggling students to catch up.

Quall honored by Principals

The Association of Washington School Principals has honored Dave Quall as one of two recipients of the President's Recognition Award for 1998-99. Association President Dennis Birr cited Quall's "legislative leadership supporting academic achievement and student safety" in selecting this year's outstanding leaders for education.



Since the House of Representatives has an equal number of Republicans and Democrats, each committee has a chair from each party. My colleague, Republican Rep. Gigi Talcott of Lakewood, Pierce County, was a pleasure to work with this session. We shared the duties of leading the Education Committee. While not agreeing on all the issues, we both are committed to strong, effective schools. Our bi-partisan efforts led to very strong compromise solutions on many tough legislative issues.

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